

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 5824

DEPT ALSO PASS INFOR IMMEDIATE: AMMAN, ATHENS, DAMASCUS,
LONDON, TEL AVIV, USUN, FOSIF ROTA SPAIN, DIA WASH DC

DEPT ALSO PASS INFO ROUTINE: ALGIERS, BAGHDAD, CAIRO,
JIDDA, KUWAIT, PARIS, ROME, STUTTGART FOR ELG,
TEHRAN, CIA WASHDC, COMSIXTHFLT, COMPHIBRON FOUR,
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SIX TWO, CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO, FINCEURLANT NORFOLK VA.

E.O. 11652: NGDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBAPESE SITUATION JULY 3: ARAB LEAGUE-SPONSORED "CEASEFIRE
"
TELL ZAATAR BATTLE NOT YET ENDED

REF: BEIRUT 5793

1. SUMMARY: TELL ZAATAR BATTLE DRAGS ON BUT STILL LIKELY TO
END IN RIGHTIST VICTORY. MEANWHILE, NEW CEASEFIRE
"AGREEMENT" SUPPOSEDLY ARRANGED AND ANNOUNCED BY ARAB LEAGUE BUT
BOTH SIDES ATTACH CONDITIONS. AL SEC GEN
RIAD VISITED RIGHTIST LEADERS JULY 2, EXPECTED VISIT LEFTIST
PALESTINIAN LEADERS JULY 3. LEBANESE FACTIONS REASSERTING THEIR
BASIC DEMANDS. NEW RAYMOND EDDE/SAEB SALAM "NATIONAL
UNION FRONT" TO BE PUBLICLY LAUNCHED SOON. AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL AGAIN AT CRISIS STAGE. SOME 50 US
CITIZENS EXPECTED DEPART JULY 4; RUSSIAN EMBASSY HAS
DISPATCH
TDR TT
SSNTS.# END SUMMARY.

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2. BATTLE OF TELL ZAATAR DRAGS ON DESPITE SUPPOSED CHRISTIAN
AND PALESTINIAN ADHERENCE TO ARAB LEAGUE-ORGANIZED CEASEFIRE
AGREEMENT. RIGHTIST RADIO CLAIMED JULY 2 VAGUELY RIGHTISTS
ARE "IN CAMP;" LEFTIST RADIO DENIED. MOST LIKELY, CHRISTIANS
OVERRAN PERIMETER DEFENSES BUT NOT PENETRATED TO CENTER OF
CAMP. THEY MAY BE DELAYING ALL-OUT FINAL ASSAULT IN HOPE
OF FIRST TAKING MAXIMUM NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL PALESTINIAN
PRISONERS AND THUS AVOIDING HIGHER CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES.

CHRISTIANS EXPECT FINAL ASSAULT, WHEN LAUNCHED, WILL NOT TAKE MORE THAN FOUR-FIVE HOURS. IN LATE REPORT, RIGHTIST RADIO 1200 LT JULY 3 CLAIMS FORCES NOW ON GROUND IN "SHANTYTOWN" HEART OF TELL ZAATAR.

3. PALESTINIAN EFFORTS TO RELIEVE PRESSURE ON TELL ZAATAR CONTINUED WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. FORCE WHICH ATTACKED FROM EAST IN MONTE-VERDE ARE (SITREP JULY 2) PENETRATED TO WITHIN TWO KILOMETERS OF CAMP DEFENSES BEFORE BEING REPULSED. AT 0300 THIS MORNING (JUL 3), PALESTINIAN/ LEFTIST FORCES OPERATING FROM ALEY BYPASSED KAHLE TO THE EAST AND ATTACKED CHRISTIAN POSITIONS IN ARAYA, PENETRATING TO THE TOWN'S CENTER BEFORE THEY WERE COUNTERATTACKED AND EJECTED.

4. ELSEWHERE, SYRIANS NOW ARE WITHDRAWING FROM SIDON AREA AND JEZZINE ROAD, HOWEVER SLOWLY, AND STILL DEMANDING LEBANESE ARAB ARMY RETURN CAPTURED EQUIPMENT AS PRICE OF WITHDRAWAL. LITTLE FIGHTING IN AREA JULY 2. IN NORTH, SYRIANS PUSHING PALESTINIAN GROUPS BACK INTO THEIR CAMPS OF BEDDROUI AND NEHR AL-BARED. IN NORTHERN BEKAA, SYRIANS NOW CONTROL MOST OF TOWN OF HERMEL.

5. NEW CEASEFIRE "AGREEMENT," ARRANGED BY ARAB LEAGUE JULY 2 SUPPOSEDLY TO TAKE EFFECT MIDNIGHT JULY 2 ENJOYING WIDER ATTENTION THAN PREVIOUS CEASEFIRE ATTEMPTS (E.G., L'ORIENT BANNER HEADLINE JULY 3: "RIGHT AND LEFT ACCEPT THE CEASEFIRE") PROBABLY BECAUSE OF ENHANCED AL MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE. BOTH SIDES, HOWEVER, PUTTING FORTH CONDITIONS WHICH LIKELY TO RENDER EFFORT INEFFECTIVE. RIGHTIST SOURCES SAY CEASEFIRE PROVIDES FOR CHRISTIAN ACCESS TO BEIRUT AIRPORT AND TO CENTRAL BANK AND OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES, PROVISION OF FUEL TO CHRISTIANS, CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCEPTANCE OF CAIRO ACCORDS BY PALESTINIANS, AND "LEBANESE" PARTICIPATION IN ENFORCEMENT OF CEASEFIRE. ON LEFT, PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST CENTRAL COMMAND SAYS CEASEFIRE DEPENDENT ON RIGHTIST CESSATION OF ATTACK ON TELL ZAATAR AND WITHDRAWAL FROM JISR AL-BASHA AND CLAIMS RIGHTISTS ACCEPTED CEASEFIRE BECAUSE THEIR MILITARY SITUATION IS WEAK.

6. AL SEC GEN RIAD AND HIS DELEGATION MET WITH MARONITE LEADERS IN KFOUR AFTER HELICOPTER FLIGHT TO JUNIEH JULY 2, THEN RETURNED AFTER CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCEMENT TO DAMASCUS LATE IN DAY. DELEGATION EXPECTED VISIT WEST BEIRUT JULY 3. AL MILITARY FORCE EFFECTIVENESS HARD TO CONCEIVE, AS RIGHTISTS MAKE CLEAR THAT CONTINGENTS FROM RADICAL ARAB STATES SUCH AS LIBYA (ALREADY ARRIVED), SOMALIA, ALGERIA, OR IRAQ (BEING DISCUSSED) NOT ACCEPTABLE. ACCORDING TO

PRESS, (FOUR LEADERS TOLD RIAD THERE MUST BE RADICAL SOLUTION TO PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON. IF AL DOES NOT FIND SOLUTION, KFOLSOWLWI ET CONSIDER ITSELF BOUND BY AL DECISIONS AND WILL TURN OO UN. AL FORCE MUST BE DETERRENT, NOT MERE "PEACE-KEEPING FORCE."

7. ON POLITICAL CONUNDRUM, LEFTIST RADIO SAYS FEBRUARY CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT CAN NO LONGER SERVE AS BASIS FOR TWALOGUE. RAYMOND EDDE AND ASSOCIATES ANNOUNCED JULY 2 THAT "NATIONAL UNION FRONT" STRONGLY OPPOSED TO PARTITION TO BE CREATED WITHIN NEXT TWO DAYS WITH PARTICIPATION BY VARIOUS CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM LEADERS.

8. AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL REPORTS EVERY BED FULL, INCLUDING EMERGENCY AND RECOVERY ROOMS: MAKING MAJOR EFFORT MOVE POST-OPERATIVE PATIENTS TO SMALL PRIVATE HOSPITALS BUT FEW BEDS AVAILABLE. NIGHT OF JULY 2-3 SAW UNUSUALLY HIGH NUMBER NEW PATIENTS, INCLUDING, ACCORDING TO HOSPITAL SOURCE, WOUNDED PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS FROM TELL ZAATAR. MAJOR OVERLAND SHIPMENT MEDICAL SUPPLIES HOPED FROM DAMASCUS JULY 5 FOLLOWING ARRIVAL IN SYRIA OF AID/FDA SHIPMENT. AUH EXPERIENCES CONTINUING STAFF SHORTAGE, PARTICULARLY OF NURSES. OPERATING THEATRES BUSY ROUND THE CLOCK AND SOME SURGEONS HAVE NOT SLEPT IN TWO DAYS.

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9. INTERNATIONAL CONVOY TO DAMASCUS ORGANIZED BY WEST GERMAN EMBASSY SCHEDULED DEPART BEIRUT EARLY MORNING JULY 4. EXPECTED TO INCLUDE SOME 50 US CITIZENS AND SOME 18 AID SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS. FORTH-THREE SOVIET EMBASSY DEPENDENTS AND "OFFICIALS GOING ON VACATION" LEFT JULY 2 BY SHIP FROM SIDON BOUND FOR ODESSA.
SEELYE

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